

[Letter from Alan Lomax to Woody Guthrie, February 4, 1941]

Library of Congress Washington, D. C. February 4, 1941

Mr. Woody Guthrie General Delivery Columbia, California

Dear Woody:

I haven't had much time to take it easy since your letter came or to do any letter-writing either. Besides "School of the Air" and "Back Where I Come From", I am working every day on a really good folk song program with my father, who should have been hired by Columbia years ago instead of me to talk about folk songs. We are putting him and his recordings on a series of transcribed records for distribution to the stations all over the country and he really takes it slow and makes it juicy.

Would you mind us using your record of "Whoopee Ti Yi Yi Yo" and "Get Along Little Dogie", which Father thinks is pretty fine?

I really miss you a lot on "Back Where I Come From". The program has become very "merry" and "jolly" since you left us. We don't have anybody who can come out and speak his mind with sincerity and honesty the way you can. Pete is on very regularly and his banjo playing adds a lot. Direction has improved a great deal and everyone likes the show except maybe Burl who is beginning to feel his oats these last days.

The tower finally got too high for us when the winter wind really began to blow and we've retreated into town in an apartment that's so snug it's practically underground, the address being 912 19th Street?. W. if you and your family are ever along that way or should care to drop me a line.

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I don't know what to do about the Tom Joad song myself since I am also in the business but I am going to call up Steinbeck's agents and see whether they won't take action for you. It seems to me they are the proper people to handle it. If I did anything myself it would appear that I had a personal grudge against Siegmeister, which I don't. I'll tell them to write you direct about it.

I hope you are going to work more on your writing and get those short stories written. When they are ready I'll show them to everybody I know and try to help get them sold if you would like me to. I believe your job in the world is as a writer as well as a talker and singer, and I hope you keep digging at it.

Give my regards to your family and to California and to those miners who know how to take it easy.

Yours, Alan Lomax